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RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6351  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9042  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4908  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1051  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2428  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 5655

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 002871

SIPDIS

NSC FOR PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: PEACE TALKS IN INDONESIA CATCH  
THAI GOVERNMENT BY SURPRISE

REF: A. BANGKOK 2808 ( MEDIATOR HAS GOOD NEWS AND BAD  
NEWS)

[B](#). CHIANG MAI 141 (SEARCHING FOR WAYS AHEAD)

[C](#). BANGKOK 2181 (UNKNOWN GROUP CALLS A CEASE-FIRE)

[D](#). JAKARTA 1792

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Classified By: DCM JAMES F. ENTWISTLE, REASON 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#). (S) Summary: Announcements by the Indonesian government that it was mediating peace talks between the Royal Thai government (RTG) and southern Thai insurgent groups, reported in the Thai press September 22, caught the Thai government by surprise. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Army, and Southern Border Provinces Administration Center all told us they knew nothing about this initiative. Dr. Mark Tamthai, the RTG point person on the secret Henri Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC) brokered peace negotiations, said these talks had no official backing, and had something to do with a political initiative by former Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyuth. (Note: Per ref A, the Indonesian government had been providing a venue for the secret HDC brokered dialogue. End note.)

[2](#). (S) Comment: We are skeptical that these talks will have any bearing on the situation in southern Thailand. Although there appears to be more behind them than the bogus peace deal announced in July by former Minister of Defense General (ret) Chetta Thanacharo (ref c), the degree to which they took the RTG by surprise suggests that they may have more to do with the negotiators seeking standing amidst the current political crisis in Bangkok. According to press sources, both Chavalit and former 4th Army Area Commander Kwanchart Klaharn, the Thai negotiator in the these talks, are looking for a role in whatever government emerges from the political turmoil; there were rumors over the weekend that Chavalit might make a comeback to government as a DPM in the new Somchai government. End Summary and Comment.

Secret channel revealed, or new channel?  
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[3](#). (SBU) According to multiple press sources, the Indonesia government announced on September 22 that it was brokering a

new track of negotiations between southern Thai insurgents and the RTG. The talks took place on September 20 and 21 and were mediated by Indonesian vice-president Jusuf Kalla at the Presidential place in Bogor, Indonesia, according to the press reports. Pictures of the Kalla-hosted sessions ran on the front page of September 22 papers; reports suggested five representatives from southern Thailand met with former 4th Army Area Commander Kwanchart Klaharn and agreed to end the violence. (Note: Kwanchart was an advisor to ex PM/Defense Minister Samak. who stepped down September 9 after a constitutional court ruling. End note.)

The RTG is not involved  
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14. (C) The RTG, however, has denied any knowledge of the talks and told us September 22 that the announcement caught them by surprise. Penprapa Vongkovit, chief of the MFA's International Security Unit, the MFA office charged with dealing with the southern insurgency, told us the MFA was not involved in the talks and knew nothing about them. She said Kwanchart had advised former Prime Minister Samak on the South, but that he was working without any political backing. She speculated that Kwanchart was now in Indonesia possibly at the request of Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, whom he may know personally. RTG policy was not to oppose these discussions, but it was impossible to support them either because they knew nothing about the insurgent groups taking part. She said this effort at dialogue would likely go nowhere because it had no official Thai support. Publicly, MFA spokesperson Tharit Charungvat said the RTG regarded the southern insurgency as an internal Thai affair and had not requested help from the Indonesians.

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15. (C) The 4th Army Area and Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) were also taken by surprise, and told us September 22 they were in the dark about any new dialogue. According to Col. Akkhara Thiprot, spokesperson for the 4th Army Area ISOC, the ISOC and the 4th Army Area were not aware of the talks and had only received word of them through the news media. Akkhara told us the Army's position had not changed; they would not negotiate with the insurgents, and anyone involved in the southern violence would be subject to criminal prosecution. He said the Army views insurgents as criminals, not part of an organized movement.

16. (C) The SBPAC was likewise caught off guard, but was more supportive of the effort. SBPAC Secretary General Natthaphong Sirichana told us September 22 that the SBPAC was not aware of the talks; SBPAC Director Phranai Suwanrath, in press statements, said he was still confused about them. Phranai stated he would welcome the negotiations, if they actually existed, because any peaceful resolution would depend on a negotiated settlement.

What's going on? Chavalit gambit?  
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17. (S) According to Dr. Mark Tamthai (please protect) point-man for the RTG's secret dialogue with southern insurgents, the negotiations announced by the Indonesian government were not part of any official operation. Tamthai said they were a "political" initiative involving former Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyuth, his Wahda political faction (note: which used to have a number of MPs representing the 3 deep south provinces affected by the insurgency), Malaysian intelligence, and a few breakaway insurgents. Tamthai said these talks had been planned for three to four months, and that the armed groups involved in the violence would not participate in them.

18. (U) Note: On September 18, Chavalit held a press conference claiming that some southern militants would

announce a cease fire October 11, in advance of a permanent peace announcement to be made December 5 in honor of the King's birthday. In the same press conference, Chavalit suggested revamping the Thai political system to allow for a 50-50 split between elected MPs and those appointed by professional groups, adopting the "New Politics" approach of the Peoples' Alliance for Democracy (PAD).

JOHN